[English]

Alleged Corruption Charges Against Officials of GIC

3271. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there have been charges of corruption and other acts of maleficence levelled against the official and the lower level employees of the General Insurance Companies;

(b) if so, the nature of such complaints received during the last three years and in the current year so far;

(c) whether any action has been taken to deal with these complaints and end the ongoing corruption in the insurance sector;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (e). It has been reported by the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC) and its subsidiary companies that they receive from time to time complaints against officers/employees of the industry pertaining to misappropriation of premium/funds; ante-dating of insurance cover notes; payment of irregular claims; misuse of staff benefit schemes; and fabricated travel expense/tour bills. Such complaints having verifiable facts are investigated by the concerned departments of the GIC and its subsidiaries in consultation with the Vigilance Department. Based on the findings of the investigation, disciplinary action is initiated and penalties are imposed as per Conduct, Discipline & Appeals Rules of the Industry. If necessary, CBI is also involved in the investigation and the delinquent employees are placed under suspension, where serious charges of embezzlement and corruption are made. Preventive vigilance steps like surprise inspections are carried out periodically.

Problem of Narcotic

3272. SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken any step to seek cooperation of the neighbouring countries regarding the problem concerning Narcotics; and

(b) if so, the details thereon?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. A co-operative machinery between India and other SAARC countries exists in the form of SAARC Durg Offences Monitoring Desk. Direct operational contact is established whenever situation demands.

India has entered into a bilateral meeting arrangement with the Govt. of Pakistan under which regular meetings at policy level and operational level are being held to chalk out strategies and exchange intelligence regarding drug trafficking.

India an Myanmar have a bilateral agreement under which regular meetings are taking place both at the policy and field level for mutual cooperation in drug related matters.

Close ties are also maintained at the operational level between Government of India and Nepal.

Joint Venture with Taiwan

3273. SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) number of proposals of Joint Venture between India and Taiwan approved during the last two years; and

(b) the details of the approved proposals alongwith the total investment made therein?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b). 29 proposals involving foreign direct investment of Rs.11.25 crores have been approved during the period from 1.1.95 to 30.9.96 between India and Taiwan.

Details of such proposals viz. Name and country of foreign collaborator, equity investment involved, item of manufacture/activity are published by the Indian Investment Centre as a supplement to the Monthly Newsletter and copies of these are regularly supplied to the Parliament Library.

Trade Fair in Delhi

3274. SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA :
KUMARI UMA BHARATI :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether ITPO has organized a trade fair in Delhi recently;

(b) if so, whether entry fee for the said fair had been doubled;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the number of visitors to the fair came down as a result thereof;

(e) if so, whether the Government propose to bring down the entry fee in future; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. The entry fee into Pragati Maidan was Rs.5.00 for adults and Rs.3.00 for children earlier. It

was raised to Rs.10.00 for adult and Rs.5.00 for children during the recently held India International Trade Fair' 96.

(c) ITPO is required to undertake its trade promotional activities in India and aboard as well as maintenance of its infrastructural facilities on self financing basis. Hence, it was felt necessary to raise the entry fee.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

World Bank Assistance to Andhra Pradesh for Rural Areas Supply

3275. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the World Bank has provided any loan for water supply and environmental sanitation projects especially for the tribal and rural areas of Andhra Pradesh during the last three years;

(b) if so, details of the project sanctioned and the amount expected to be allocated project-wise out of the funds received from the World Bank.

(c) the details of implementing agencies of these project;

(d) whether the Government have approved any project for rural area of Guntur district of A.P. for providing drinking water out of the World Bank help; and

(e) if so, the progress made so far?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e). Do not arise.

Loans to Agricultural and Industrial Sectors

3276. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the amount of loans provided by the Public Sector Banks to Industry and Agriculture sectors separately during the last three years in Punjab; and

(b) the estimated requirement of loans of agriculture in Punjab and the steps taken by the Government to allocate sufficient funds therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). Outstanding advances of public sector banks to agriculture and industry during the last three years in Punjab, as furnished by Punjab National Bank, the convenor bank for State Level Bankers' Committee of Punjab, were as under :

(Rs. crore)

Category of Outsatanding Advances	March 1994	March 1995	March 1996
1. Agriculture	1464	1622	1855
2. Small Scale Industries & Cottage Industries	1288	1515	1882
3. Other (including medium & large scale industries)	3642	4640	4986
Total	6394	7777	8733

Punjab National Bank has further reported that the estimated requirement of loans for agriculture in Punjab is Rs.1809 crore as projected in Annual Credit Plan 1996-97, which is expected to be met by participating banks.

Regulation for Foreign Exchange

3277. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state the details of the special regulation of RBI and Ministry of Finance relating to foreign exchange allowances and expenditure on private and official visit of the Union Minister, Minister of State Governments, Governors, Chief Ministers, MP's and IAS/IPS/IFS officials?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : Government officials (including Minister; and Members of Government delegations going abroad are released foreign exchange on the basis of per diem rates stipulated by the Government (i.e. the Ministry of External Affairs) which vary from country to country. They are also entitled for release of foreign exchange towards personal incidentals @US $ 50 - per day, Subjects to being minimum US $ 500/- and a maximum of US $ 1,500/-.

VIPs State legislators, officials of Central or any State Government who travel at the invitation from abroad on full hospitality i.e. where no State funding is involved for either the journey or stay abroad are entitled for release of foreign exchange towards incidental express @ US $ 50/- per day for the duration of the stay abroad, subject to a maximum of 30 days.

While going on private visits abroad they are entitled to draw foreign exchange under basic Travel Quota which is US $ 2,000/- per annum.

Incentives offered to NRIs

3278. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the incentives offered to NRIs for foreign